

RI State Conservation Committee
17 Smith Avenue, Greenville, RI 02828

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 20, 2007

9:00 AM

USDA NRCS Conference Room

Eric called the meeting to order at 9:10 am.

In attendance were:

**Members – Eric Offenbergs-Governor’s Appointee, Gregg Cassidy-RI
DEM Representative and Harriet Powell-Southern District
Representative.**

**Advisors – Rob Swanson-USDA Farm Service Agency
Alicia Lehrer-Southern District, Tom Sandham-Eastern District and
Wendy Hoyle-Northern District**

I. Minutes

**Motion was made to accept the December 13th meeting minutes
as read, Harriet/**

Gregg. Vote was unanimous.

II. Financial Report

The financial report was distributed. It was noted that the State Committee is

waiting for an invoice to pay for the majority of the printing of the updated

Citizens Guides. The guides are completed and ready for distribution.

It was discussed whether the Committee should write a letter to Mike Sullivan

outlining the work the districts do and asking for his support for district funds.

It was decided to send Mike the three district annual reports showing the vast

scope of work the districts do throughout RI.

Motion was made to accept the financial report as presented, Harriet/Gregg. Vote was unanimous.

III. Reports

a. Chair

The Northern District calendars went out to all the agency directors and/or

chairs of the advisors and members. An email went out to Mike

Lenihan, but

he did not respond. Alicia will follow through with Pat Lenihan.

NRCS is able to provide public relations for the districts.

b. District/Advisors Reports

-ERICD – Tom reviewed the Eastern District report that was previously distributed to the committee. The Livestock Association is working on hiring a manager.

The district is working with Farmscapes on having a center that will include have chefs from

Johnson and Wales and a centralized warehouse for farmers and buyers. They are planning on publicizing this center.

Eastern District, NRCS and URI are working on a research project to see how much food

would it take the feed the people of Aquidneck Island so they may be able to provide local food to that area.

Tom would like to work with Stu Nunnery on a project that would provide every school with a garden.

-SRICD – Alicia highlighted items in the Southern District's report that was previously distributed to the committee.

IV. Old Business

a. RIACD Strategic Planning

There was no one at the meeting to report.

V. New Business

a. FFOS Land Values

The Farm, Forest and Open Space Subcommittee submitted a letter to the State Committee

with the recommended values for 2007. The recommendation is to retain the values for

another year, due to the issue of not being able to obtain a quorum because of Separation of Powers.

Motion was made to accept the subcommittee's recommendations, Harriet/Greg. Vote was unanimous.

b. CIG Proposal

Roylene has met with the districts requesting their assistance in administering the Conservation

Initiative Grant Program. This program oversees those with innovative ideas to assist in

farming. Tom has reviewed the outline of the project and feels the districts would be able to do

the work. The workload would be split between the three districts. NRCS would like the

agreement to work with the districts be signed by the State Committee and the State Committee

would disseminate the funds to the 3 districts. NRCS will train the districts and there is an

option to terminate if it does not work out in the districts favor. Eric would like to see a chart

of how the grant will cover the districts costs since this is supposed to help the districts with

assistance they used to receive from NRCS. At this time, there is a freeze on any new

agreements, but NRCS feels they should be able to move ahead soon. The committee

discussed if there was a need for an RFP, but can be designated as a 'sole source agreement'.

Motion was made to approve signing the agreement pending the ability for NRCS to move

ahead, Harriet/Gregg. Vote was unanimous.

Motion was made to adjourn at 10:10 am, Harriet/Gregg. Vote was unanimous.